DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 158 942 RC 010 707

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TITLE Choices & Careers; Free to Choose: Being a Special Person - Unit for Adults. Leaders Guide.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Univ., Madison, Univ. Extension.
SPONS AGENCY Extension Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.
NOTE 31p.; For related documents see ED 152 446-449 and RC 010 701-709

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alcoholism; *American Indians; *Career Awareness; *Career Education; *Females; Group Instruction; Health Education; Leaders Guides; Money Management; Nutrition Instruction; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Participation; *Self Actualization; *Teenagers; Tribes
IDENTIFIERS *Career Development Project for Tribal Girls

ABSTRACT

This leaders' guide is for use in group sessions or individual meetings with parents of girls participating in the Choices & Careers: Free to Choose program. It is based upon units the girls study, including "The Outside You," "Your Money," "Food and You," "Alcoholism," "Coping with Parents," and "Life Span Planning." Each section of the document features learning experiences such as discussions, programs, questionnaires, games, and other activities that are based on specific objectives. These objectives include: (1) helping young girls learn to develop their inner abilities rather than focusing on the external aspects of themselves; (2) learning to manage their financial resources in a reasonable manner; (3) understanding the importance of adequate nutrition; (4) recognizing the signs of alcoholism and understanding how it can be treated; (5) reducing family conflict with a mutual understanding by teenagers and parents of the changes that occur as girls grow up; and (6) helping girls plan for their whole life span. Specific information on developing a positive self concept is also included. (Author/DS)

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ED158942

Being A Special Person Unit for Adults

by Cathaleen Finley & Marian Thompson

Leaders Guide

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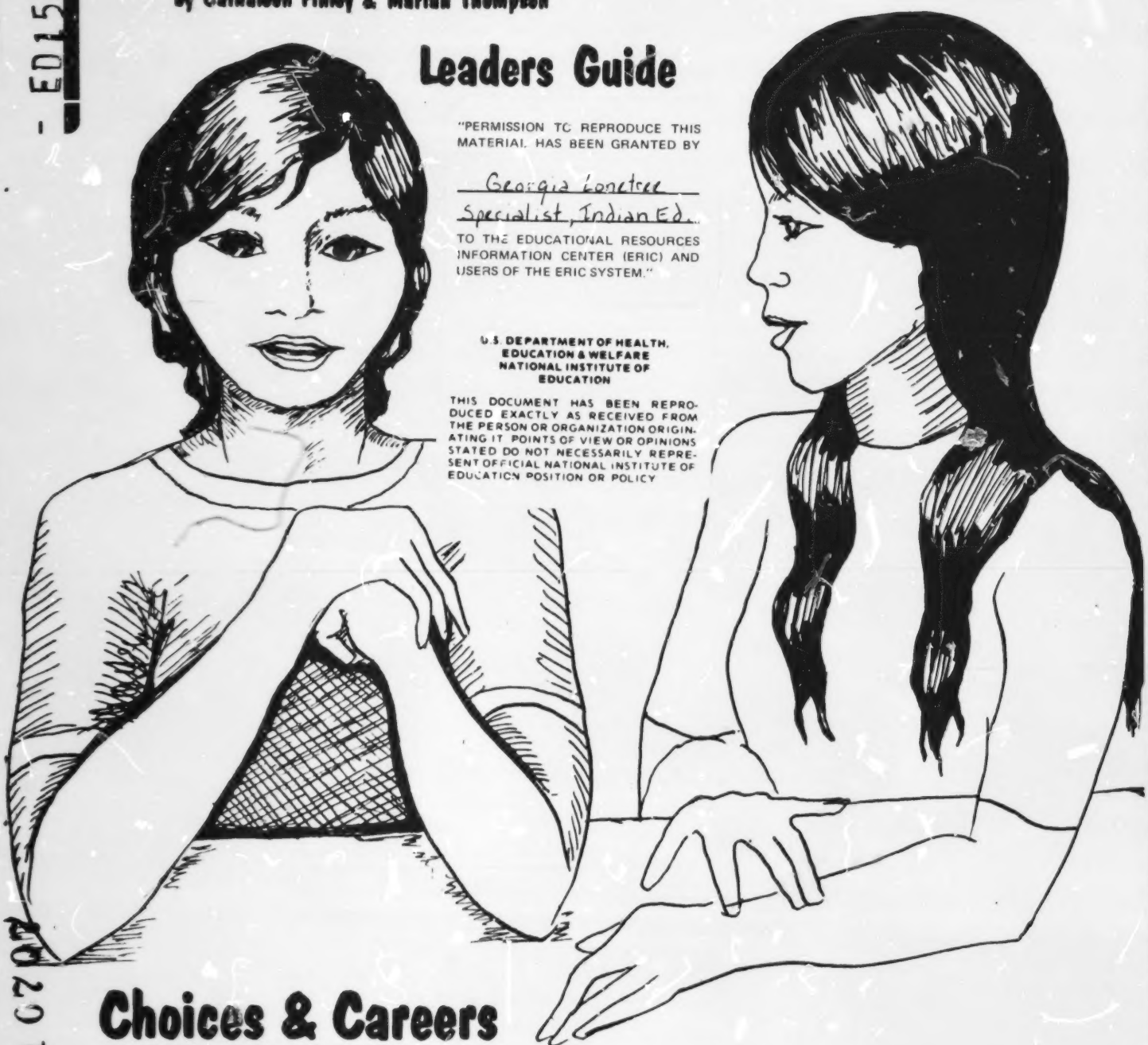

Choices & Careers Free To Choose

RC 01 07 07

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W2P29

Fact Sheet

Being a Special Person—Unit for Adults
Choices & Careers
Free To Choose

The unit "Being a Special Person" is based upon the units "The Outside You," "Your Money," "Food and You," "Alcoholism," "Coping With Parents," and "Life Span Planning." The unit also includes specific information on developing a positive self-concept.

The unit can be used for group sessions or individual meetings with parents of girls who are participating in the program and others in the community who work with girls and young women. The unit includes a Leaders Guide (W2P29) and "Being a Special Person" (W3P29), a booklet for parents and others. The leaflets "Your Girl Grows Up" (W4P29-1) and "The Alcoholic Teen-ager: How Can Parents Help?" (W4P29-2) are also included in the unit. A set of sketches, "Your Girl Grows Up I" (WKP29-a-1-13) and "Your Girl Grows Up II" (WKP29-b-1-14) are also included in the unit.

A set of sketches on the Daily Food Guide called "Key Nutrients" (WKGX14-1-11), which are part of the unit "Food and You," may be used as a teaching aid. Another teaching aid is the set of cards of money quotes (WKGX13a) which is part of the unit "Your Money."

About The Author

The unit was adopted by Cathaleen Finley and Marian Thompson from units written by Cathaleen Finley, Debbie Tucker Kruger, and Marian Thompson.

Cathaleen Finley is an associate professor in the Department of Family Development, University of Wisconsin—Extension.

Marian Thompson is a specialist with Women's Education Resources and Family Living Education, University of Wisconsin—Extension. She is the mother of four daughters.

Illustrations for the unit were done by Amy Martin.

About The Program

"Being a Special Person" has been developed as part of the project Choices & Careers, Free to Choose, a career development project for tribal girls. The project was developed with the assistance of tribal women in Wisconsin and was funded with special needs funds from Extension Service-USDA.

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Being a Special Person — Unit for Adults

To start the session you might use the set of illustrations that focuses upon the growth and development of young girls. The first set, Your Girl Grows Up I (WKP29-a-1-13), is on girls six to 12 years old, and the second set, Your Girl Grows Up II (WKP29-b-1-14), is on girls 12 to 18.

Following is a description of the sketches and the narration for them.

SKETCHES	SCRIPT:
1. Sketch of young children playing.	1. Your young daughter.
2. Sketch of a young girl coloring.	2. Your little girl is growing very fast. She is taller, heavier, and stronger than many boys her own age. Your daughter has already learned many skills and concepts, but now she will use them in lots of new ways.
3. Sketch of a small girl climbing a hill.	3. When she was younger she learned how to run or climb, but now she can run faster and farther or climb some of the most difficult hills around your home.
4. Sketch of a young girl sweeping floor.	4. Your daughter is becoming more independent and more able to make decisions about what to do and how to do it. The person she has been as a preschooler is now a little more complete.
5. Sketch of a young girl reading.	5. Your daughter is gaining control over her body. Sewing becomes easier as she gains control over her finger muscles. Reading becomes easier as her eyes focus better and don't tire as easily. She is also able to spend more time doing fewer things, so more seems to get done.

6. Sketch of a family.	6. As a parent you may feel a little less important. Your daughter is probably beginning to question your decisions and ideas. But you still are a very important part of your daughter's life.
7. Sketch of a mother and daughter making a bed.	7. The encouragement you give your daughter tells her, "You are an important person; you can do things that matter." This helps your daughter feel better about the person she is becoming.
8. Sketch of three young girls playing a game.	8. Friends are becoming a special part of your daughter's life. She wants to do things with her friends. She wants them to like her, to make her a special part of the group.
9. Sketch of a girl watching TV.	9. Many other things are influencing her life. Television, newspapers, movies, books all bring your daughter new ideas to think about. She may be learning ways of doing things that you do not approve of or have never thought about.
10. Sketch of a girl talking to an adult.	10. Other adults, either aunts and uncles or teachers, begin to be very important to your daughter. She is probably seeking their advice and comparing their ideas with yours.
11. Sketch of a girl all by herself daydreaming on a sofa.	11. Your daughter is probably beginning to spend some time thinking things through or daydreaming. As she gets older, she stops thinking things are either all right or all wrong, all good or all bad. She can begin to think about what makes something good or right. You might be surprised at how she can question war or poverty.

12. Sketch of a school.	12. School is an important part of your daughter's life. She is spending a lot of time there, more time than she spends with you. When she is happy in school, her whole life seems happy; when she is unhappy there, she's very unhappy with everyone. You can help her by finding ways to help her teachers understand the special person she is. Help them understand the special dreams she may have for her future.
13. Sketch of two girls playing.	13. Your daughter may seem very much like an adult, but she is still a child. She needs more time to work on skills and understandings. But she is always growing and very soon she will enter young adulthood. Right now she needs your love and encouragement to have a happy ending to her childhood.

YOUR GIRL GROWS UP II

SKETCH	SCRIPT:
1. Sketch of a teen-age girl looking in a mirror.	1. Your teen-age daughter.
2. Sketch of a teen-age girl with a preschooler.	2. Your daughter is becoming a "girl-woman"; she is leaving childhood behind and looking for adulthood. You have probably noticed how different she looks from the clumsy two year old you used to bounce up high. Your little girl is different in many ways.
3. Sketch of teen-age girl looking in a mirror and holding up clothes.	3. Her body has changed quickly. She is beginning to look more and more like a woman and less like a child. These changes may upset her if they come faster or slower than changes in her friends' bodies. Take some time to learn when changes will occur and help her get ready for them.

4. Sketch of two teen-age girls visiting.	4. Your daughter is beginning to think in different ways. As she gets older, she is more interested in what might be instead of just what is. Daydreams become more important, and her ideas may seem a little strange to you. But take some time to hear about what she is thinking and what she's interested in these days.
5. Sketch of a teen-age girl with her mother and grandmother.	5. In a simpler society than ours, a child usually moved quickly and easily into adulthood. But your daughter is probably a little confused over what being an adult is all about. As she makes her way to womanhood, she is experiencing so many changes and challenges.
6. Sketch of two teen-age girls about to visit with boys with car.	6. Your daughter may try jumping into some adult roles before she is ready. Or she might hold back, being afraid to make up her mind. She needs your help in sorting out what's happening to her and to her world.
7. Sketch of two teen-age girls visiting.	7. Becoming an adult is a difficult step to take. Your daughter is a very special person. She has special talents and an individual personality all her own. At times she may seem wrapped up in herself and her own ideas; this is her way of growing.
8. Sketch of a mother and daughter visiting at the kitchen table.	8. Your daughter is searching for her own set of values and might question you about your own. Before her values become a real part of her life, she will question and test new ideas until things make sense to her.

9. Sketch of a teen-age boy and girl.	9. Your daughter has discovered an interest in boys. She needs experience with boys her own age, so that she can develop skill in caring about other people and sharing herself with others. Most parents are a little frightened of early dating, but you can help your daughter by talking to her about responsibility for others before she begins dating. Help her learn about loving by loving her.
10. Sketch of a girl walking out of a house.	10. Teen-agers usually feel they have to prove themselves. Your daughter may seem to be leaving her family behind as she spends more time away from you. You might begin to feel like an unnecessary part of her life, but you really are very important. Some teens may act as though their parents are too "outdated" to be of much use, but most really develop into people who are very much like those parents they try to leave behind.
11. EDUCATION.	11. Your daughter will find growing up easier and more exciting if she has a good education. Career choices depend on a strong education that prepares you for special skills.
12. SELF-ESTEEM.	12. Feeling good about the person she is is an important ingredient in success. You can help your daughter by making her feel like an important part of your family and her community. Let her know that there are things that she can do and do well.
13. EXPERIENCE.	13. Give your daughter as many experiences as possible. Teach her about successful women who can be her models. Give her a chance to visit new places and learn as many new skills as possible.

14. LOVE.	14. Help your daughter by letting her grow up with love. From you she can learn what love is and what loving really means. Friendship grows on love, and with special friends your daughter can discover the real beauty and adventure of adult life.

The Outside You

Objectives

1. Adults will understand the value of helping girls develop their inner abilities rather than focus on the external aspects of themselves.
2. Adults will help girls practice good grooming habits.

Background Information

The background information can be found in "The Outside You," Book II and Book III.

Learning Experiences

1. Clip cosmetic and good grooming advertisements from magazines. Have the group look through the ads.
   a. Ask the group to define the word "beautiful."
   b. Ask the group why so many cosmetics are sold. (The cosmetic industry is a big business that makes lots of money. Cosmetic companies advertise a great deal. Men make money from selling women cosmetics. Women buy cosmetics to try to change how they look. Sometimes they do this to please themselves, but often they do it to please men.)

c. Have the group count the most frequently used words, such as youth, beauty, etc. Advertising often uses the "soft sell" and encourages women to buy the product to make themselves "beautiful" but does not give information about the product.

d. Have the group check to see what the ad really tells about the product.

e. Ask the people what the ads are really telling them.

f. Ask the people what products they actually need.

2. Discuss with the group members why many Americans spend lots of money and time trying to get the nice tan-colored complexion they already have.

3. Ask the people if they know where sweat baths really started.

4. Ask the people why they think Indian people had different bathing customs than non-Indians. Which were the better customs?

Your Money

Objectives

1. Adults will understand the value of helping girls manage their financial resources in a reasonable manner.

2. Adults will help girls manage their resources in a reasonable manner.

Background Information

The background information can be found in "Your Money," Book III.

Learning Experiences

1. Explain to the group why financial management skills are important skills for young women to have when continuing their education

beyond high school.

2. Have the people in the group complete the activity sheet, "What I Like to Do" on page 12 of the booklet, "Being a Special Person." After they have completed it, ask how they felt about the different questions. They might do this by raising their hand and shaking it if they strongly agree, raising their hand and holding it still if they just agree, putting their hand down if they disagree, and putting their hand down and shaking it if they really disagree. Point out that there are no right or wrong answers and that the exercise shows how most people have different attitudes about using money.

3. Pass out the quotes about money to the group. The quotes are part of "Your Money" unit for girls. Have the people discuss some of the ones they agree with and some of the ones they disagree with. Why do they agree or disagree? Point out how some of the quotes take an opposite point of view.

   Following is the list of quotes.

   1. If you add only a little to a little and do this often, soon that little will become great.
   2. Dig a well before you are thirsty.
   3. He that buys what he does not want will soon want what he cannot buy.
   4. Wise men say keep somewhat till a rainy day.
   5. Ready money is Aladdin's lamp.
   6. A penny saved is a penny earned.
   7. Money is a good servant but a bad master.
   8. It is better to have a hen tomorrow than an egg today.
   9. A stitch in time saves nine.
   10. Money is a guarantee that we may have what we want in the future.

11. Money has no legs, but it runs.

12. A man who both spends and saves has both enjoyments.

13. Oh, why don't you save all the money you earn? If I didn't have to eat, I'd have money to burn.

14. In the old days a man who saved money was a miser; nowadays he's a wonder.

15. I find it more trouble to watch after money than to get it.

16. Of saving cometh having.

17. It was said of old Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, that she never puts dots over her i's, to save ink.

18. Money is like an arm or a leg - use it or lose it.

19. The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money.

20. Money is like an eel in the hand.

21. Money is more trouble than its worth.

22. He who has a choice has trouble.

23. Budgets are not merely affairs of arithmetic.

24. The real price of everything is the toil and trouble of acquiring it.

25. Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

26. Many of us spend half our time wishing for things we could have if we didn't spend half our time wishing.

27. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more.

28. Let us all be happy and live within our means, even if we have to borrow the money to do it.

29. A father is a banker provided by nature.

30. It's good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things that money can't buy.

31. Don't a fellow feel good after he gets out of a store where he nearly bought something.

32. The future is purchased by the present.

33. The future belongs to him who knows how to wait.

4. Ask the people in the group to list what they would do if they suddenly were given $100 to spend. After they have made this list, ask them how many would have
   a. given some of it away.
   b. saved some of it.
   c. spent it for fun things.
   d. spent it for things they really needed.
5. Have the people list as many human and nonhuman resources as possible in three or five minutes. Time them. See who has the longest list. Have the people share their lists with the rest of the group.
6. Illustrate to the group some of the ideas that the girls are learning and the ways you are teaching.
   Have the people pretend that they are 12 years old and that their friend's birthday will be next week. Each has been invited to the party but has only 30 cents. There is no hope of getting more money. What resources other than money could they use for a gift? Discuss as a group what they could do about it.
7. Because sharing is one main concept of the unit "Your Money," you might have the adults choose teams of three or four and debate the pros and cons of the statement, "Too much sharing is too much of a good thing."

Food and You

Objectives

1. Adults will understand the importance of adequate nutrition.
2. Adults will help girls understand the importance of having an adequate diet.

Background Information

The background information can be found in "Food and You," Book III.

Learning Experiences

1. Show the group the series of sketches called "Key Nutrients" (WKGX14). Explain how the various nutrients affect a person. They are part of the unit "Food and You." Following are comments which you may wish to make as you use the sketches.

1. Key nutrients:	The body needs these nutrients. The key groups of nutrients are proteins, minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, and fats.
2. Protein builds and repairs.	Protein builds and repairs. The nutrient protein is needed by every cell in the body. All your muscles are built from protein.
3. Protein is found in:	Protein is found in such foods as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, peas, and nuts. Milk and cereal foods also give you protein.
4. Calcium helps build bones.	You need calcium to help build strong bones and teeth. Calcium helps your muscles to work and your nerves to carry messages. It also helps to clot your blood and to keep your heart beating.
5. Calcium is found in:	Milk is a good source of calcium. Foods made from milk, such as cheese, are another good source of calcium. Dark green leafy vegetables also have calcium.
6. Iron helps carry oxygen to cells.	Iron is needed by all cells, especially the red blood cells. Without iron, you feel tired and run down.
7. Iron is found in:	Iron is found in a wide variety of foods such as lean meats, liver, dried peas and beans, dark green vegetables, many dried fruits, and whole or enriched grain fruits.

8. Vitamin A helps you see in the dark.	Vitamin A is needed for growth and helps you see in the dark. Vitamin A also helps protect you from infection by keeping the linings of your mouth and digestive system in good condition.
9. Vitamin A is found in:	Deep green and deep yellow vegetables are rich in Vitamin A. They include broccoli, leafy greens, carrots, and sweet potatoes. Milk also provides Vitamin A.
10. Vitamin C helps hold cells together.	Vitamin C helps hold your body cells together and keeps the walls of your blood vessels strong. Vitamin C is also needed to heal wounds. Without enough Vitamin C, your gums may bleed.
11. Vitamin C is found in:	Citrus fruits, such as oranges, are rich in Vitamin C. Tomatoes, cantaloupes, strawberries, raw cabbage, and potatoes cooked in their jackets also provide Vitamin C.

2. Using the two posters on the guide, explain the Daily Food Guide to the group. They are part of the unit, "Food and You."

3. Have the people list the things they have eaten for the day. Then have them check their list against the Daily Food Guide. Ask them how well they did for the day.

4. Using the girls' booklet "Food and You," discuss with the group the sources of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, calcium, and iron long ago. Discuss with the people how they can use similar foods today.

5. Have the group play the Bingo-lingo game, which is done in the Chippewa language. You may want to have the parents or others help the girls make a similar game if their tribal language is not Chippewa.

6. Have the group complete the quiz "Your Diet IQ" on page 13 of the booklet, "Being a Special Person."

Following are the correct answers:

(1) Obesity is due entirely to heredity.

False. Obesity is caused by eating more calories than the body uses.

(2) Meal skipping is a good way to lose weight.

False. When a girl skips meals she may be so hungry that she eats much more at the next meal, thus taking in extra calories.

(3) Sugar is not as fattening as fat.

False. Starch turns into sugar inside the body.

(4) Protein foods are not fattening.

False. Protein foods have calories. If a girl eats more protein foods than she needs, the extra protein becomes fat which is stored by the body.

(5) A girl should avoid breads and cereals when trying to lose weight.

False. Breads and cereals provide nutrients that are needed for good health.

7. Discuss with the group how important it is for children to eat breakfast before going to school if their school does not have a breakfast program.

8. Discuss with the group how important it is for children to take part in school breakfast or lunch programs.

Alcoholism

Objective

Adults as well as teenagers will recognize the signs of alcoholism and understand how it can be treated.

Background Information

The background information can be found in "Alcoholism," Book III.

Learning Experience

1. Have the group fill out the questionnaire about alcoholism on page

14 of the booklet, "Being a Special Person." Have them discuss their answers. Following are the correct answers.

(1) False; the alcoholic is powerless to control the amount she drinks.

(2) False; it disrupts lives, marriages, and work performance. The alcoholic may have a car accident that could injure or kill others.

(3) True.

(4) False; alcoholics are found in any grade level, income level, occupational group, or race.

(5) True.

(6) False.

(7) True.

(8) True.

(9) False.

(10) True.

(11) False.

(12) False; it is a depressant.

(13) False.

(14) True.

(15) True.

(16) True.

(17) False.

(18) True.

(19) True.

(20) True.

Coping With Parents

Objective

Adults will be aware that family conflict can be reduced through

mutual understanding by teenagers and parents of the changes that occu as girls grow up.

Background Information

The background information can be found in "Coping With Parents," Book III.

Learning Experience

1. Have the group do the quiz "Parents and Teen-agers" on page 13 of the booklet, "Being a Special Person." Discuss the answers.

(1) False. It is normal for you and your teen-agers to have problems and at times to argue.

(2) False. Parents may try to be more lenient—and succeed for a time—but often old habits and reactions soon take over.

(3) True.

(4) False. It is also a teen-ager's responsibility as a family member to help improve their family life. There are many things she can do to help, including trying to understand her parents and learning to compromise gracefully.

(5) False. She may be growing and changing so fast and so much that it would be hard for even an enlightened and understanding parent to adjust.

(6) True. This is a necessary requirement for her development as an adult. She will need to be critical so that she can decide what kind of person she wants to be, different from her parents.

(7) False. Because of age, generation, and individual differences, complete understanding is not possible.

(8) True. This is especially true when she feels that her parents aren't moving quickly enough to give her the greater responsibility and freedom that she desires.

(9) True. Their rapid growth, the differences between your ages, etc. would make this impossible.

(10) False. There are many things that can be done to help relieve tension and anger—for example, points 1 to 7 under "What You Can Do to Help" and other suggestions in Book III.

Life Span Planning

Objective

Parents will be aware that planning for a whole lifetime will help girls make more informed decisions.

Background Information

Background information can be found in the Leaders Guide for "Life Span Planning" and "Life Span Planning," Book I, II, or III.

Learning Experiences

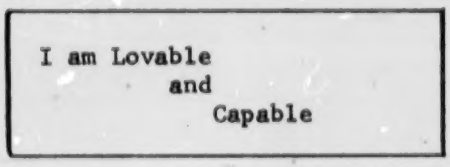
1. The group might examine a Life Span Planning chart to understand what it is and why it is recommended as the final activity of the Choices and Careers program.
2. The group might also discuss whether they should consider designing a Life Span Planning chart for themselves that would cover the rest of their lives. They might consider what they will do when their children are grown, where they can get further education or job training, and what resources are available. Answers to these questions are readily available in "Educational Opportunities," "Career Opportunities," and "Exploring Careers" units in the daughter's materials.
3. This unit also offers the group leader a good opportunity to show parents how to use the resources available to girls in the program such as The Career Education Directory, Handbook of Job Facts, Introduction to the University of Wisconsin System, Occupational

Outlook Handbook, and Opportunities Through Education.

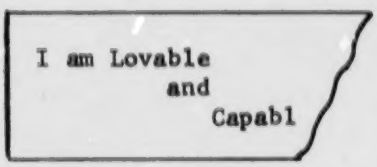
Self Concept

Many things affect a girl's self-concept. Parents and other adults affect how a girl feels about herself. To illustrate this, you could have the group do the activity "I am Lovable and Capable."

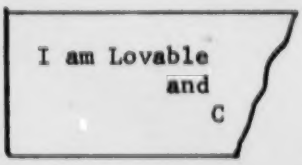
1. Begin with a piece of paper that has the words "I am Lovable and Capable" on it. Explain to the group that being loved and feeling capable are two key parts of our self-concept. Point out what people and things do that tell us if we are in fact loved and capable. Tell them that the sign you are holding represents a child's self-concept and you will demonstrate the kinds of things that happen to her or him to make that child feel more or less lovable and capable.
2. I'm nine years old and I'm bouncing out of bed ready for a new day at school. (Point out that your self-concept card is in one piece.)



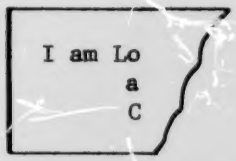
3. Mom's voice yells, "Hurry up! Don't you remember you're going to a new school today?" (Tear off a piece of the self-concept card.)



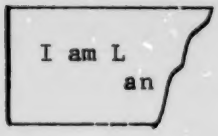
4. I'm hurrying to the bus but can't remember which corner to stand on. (Tear off another piece.)



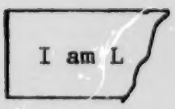
5. I get to school and can't find my classroom. (Tear off another piece.



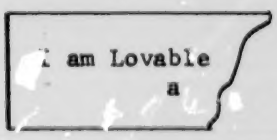
6. I don't know what to do in the cafeteria. (Tear off another piece.)



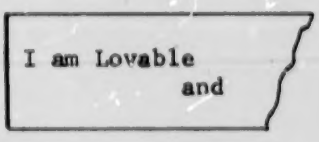
7. I can't find my bus to go home. I finally find it but miss my stop. (Tear off another piece and clutch the last corner very tightly.)



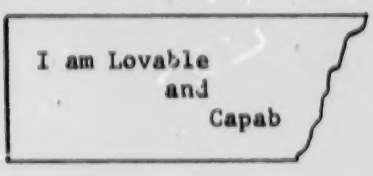
8. I walk in the door and hear Mom call out, "Am I glad to see you! Tell me all about your day at school!" (Add a piece to your self-concept card.)



9. Everyone comes home and is anxious to hear about my day. (Add another piece.)



10. Dad asks me to help him carry a few things next door and thanks me for helping him. (Add another piece.)



A. Discuss the demonstration you just did.

1. What kinds of things made that child tear a piece of her self-concept off? Why?
2. What kinds of things made that child build her self-concept back up? Why?

B. Now suggest that the group divide into small groups of two or three.

1. Discuss the kinds of things that build up and tear down their own self-concept.
2. Develop a short skit to demonstrate the ideas they come up with.
3. Perform the skits for each other.

SUMMARY

People learn best when they are exposed to an idea several times. Suggest to the parents that they use the activities on pages 17 to 23 of the booklet, "Being a Special Person" with their daughters. Also, they might like to discuss some of the activities in the "Activity Section" of the girls book for the units with their daughters. Adults who have occasion to work with youth might also like to use some of the activities individually with the girls.

The booklet, "Being a Special Person" can also be used as a tool when making home visits with parents. You could use the booklet to explain what girls are learning in the program. You and the girls' parents might do some of the activities in the "Activity Section" of the booklet. Then you could show parents how to use the section of the booklet called, "Things To Do With Your Daughter."

Your Girl Grows Up

by Lois Bakawa-Evenson

illustrated by Vicki Wayman

Choices and Careers
Free To Choose

University of Wisconsin–Extension, Gale L. VandeBerg, director, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties, publishes this information to further the purpose of the May 8 and June 30, 1914 Acts of Congress; and provides equal opportunities in employment and programming.

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Who Is She?

Girls are a mixture of inherited characteristics and broadening experiences. They share some basic needs with everyone that has ever lived, but each one also has a unique set of values and goals. Their life is dynamic and their personality is developing.

The person they believe they are is a reflection of many things. As they interact with other people they gain some feeling about how important people are to them. They begin to feel loved or needed and cared about. As they interact with their environment they gain some sense of capability - how well they can do things or make things work. In this way they are developing their own self-concept, learning just how lovable and capable a person they are.

Other people - parents and those who work with girls, are important in their lives. You will probably discover that feeling accepted by others is important to girls. Think about what you convey to girls. Girls need to have a sense of success. How accepting are you? How encouraging are you? Do you let them know when they are successful? Acceptance and success are just different words for being lovable and capable.

Becoming your own best person is a never-ending task. Help girls to believe that they are a unique person and valuable for that uniqueness. Feeling good about oneself is an important step in the direction of accepting the person one is - really liking oneself and encouraging other people to like you. Parents and those who work with girls can help girls to do this.

Naturally, if after talking to your child the situation does not change and the child is starting to get in trouble, then you must intervene and take her to a professional. But remember to talk and show her that you care.

Perhaps the most important -- and difficult things parents could do would be to try to change the over tolerant attitudes towards drinking -- for yourself, for your family, and for the community. Our society -- whether it is white or Indian tends to place a great deal of emphasis on having alcohol -- and plenty of it -- as a necessity at any kind of gathering of people. It's a drinking world and it seems that alcohol is necessary to have fun or to be able to relax. From their parents, their peers and the mass media teen-agers develop these same attitudes -- that as soon as a few kids gather together they're going to need some alcohol so they can relax and have fun. It is a necessity at such times. As a result, alcoholism among both teen-agers and adults is on the increase.

Alcoholism is indeed a different problem -- and one that once it has developed is difficult to cure. The best cure -- and just as difficult -- is "prevention" through a change in attitudes toward, and tolerance for the use of alcohol.

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The Alcoholic Teen-Ager: How Can The Parent Help ?

Debbie Tucker Kruger

UWEX Cooperative Extension Programs
University of Wisconsin-Extension

The Alcoholic Teen-Ager
How Can The Parent Help?

Since alcoholism among teen-agers is increasing it is important for parents to know what they can do to help their teen-ager. Parents are the teen-agers first line of defense and help.

What can you do? The first problem is to know whether or not your child is in trouble. A teen-ager may come home drunk once or twice but this does not mean that she is an alcoholic, but, as one teen-age alcoholic stated, "If she begins to withdraw from the family, that's a sign that she may be messed up."

"Or, if she has a personality change," said another teen-ager. "Before I was drinking I was a goody-goody. Then I began to get into fights and cause trouble at school."

What should a parent do if she concludes that her child is drinking too much? "Sit down and talk with her," one teen-ager says. "Ask her if she thinks she's got a problem and does she want to do something about it. Show her that you care. If she's just drinking to go along, she may stop."

Above all -- don't get irritated with her or tell her what to do. She would probably just resent it rebel and drink even more. Just talk to her about it -- don't lecture.

One approach may be to ask her questions. For example. Do you think you're an alcoholic, since many people who drink are alcoholics? Are you constantly drinking more? Do you need it to get through social situations? Are you becoming more grandiose or aggressive? Is alcohol starting to interfere with your life? Then tell your child that you don't need answers to these questions but that you'd just like her to think about these things, but tell her that if she wants help that you'll be glad to go with her.